

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017334

FOLLOWING REPEAT VALLETTA 0096 ACTION SECSTATE
INFO LONDON PARIS ROME NATO 21 JAN 77

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0096

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MT, IT, FR

SUBJECT: ITALIAN/FRENCH DISCUSSIONS WITH MINTOFF

1. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR DA-RIN BRIEFED ME THIS MORNING
ON PRESENT STATE OF EXCHANGES WITH GOM ON MINTOFF'S
EFFORTS TO GET EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR HIS AID/NEUTRALITY
CONCEPT.

2. ACCORDING TO DA-RIN, MINTOFF HAS NOW BEEN DRAGGED,
KICKING AND SCREAMING, TO POINT WHERE HE SAYS HE WILL
GO ALONG WITH THE IDEA OF DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FRENCH
AND THE ITALIANS, AS SPOKESMEN FOR THE EC, BUT ONLY
SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIO THAT CONCRETE RESULTS ARE IN
HAND BY THE END OF FEBRUARY. THE FRENCH AND ITALIANS
HAVE AGREED IN ROME ON THE OUTLINES OF THEIR APPROACH;
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THESE ARE NOW BEING GIVEN FINAL CLEARANCE BY THE QUAI
IN PARIS AND DA-RIN EXPECTS THAT HE AND HIS NEWLY ARRIVED
FRENCH COLLEAGUE GELADE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO SIT
DOWN WITH THE MALTESE WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO, PROBABLY
WITH EDGAR MIZZI IN THE FIRST INSTANCE.

3. DA-RIN'S BRIEFING INCLUDED LONG AND COLORFUL ACCOUNT,

IN STYLE WHICH THOSE IN DEPARTMENT WHO KNOW DA-RIN WOULD HAVE APPRECIATED, OF EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT EXCHANGES BETWEEN ITALIANS AND MINTOFF OVER PAST SIX MONTHS, REFLECTING BOTH MINTOFF'S CAPACITY TO ABUSE AND THREATEN AS WELL AS HIS INSISTENCE, REAL OR TACTICAL, THAT EUROPE IS WRONGLY IGNORING MALTA AND ITS PROBLEMS AND IN THE PROCESS FORCING IT TO MOVE CLOSER TO ITS ARAB FRIENDS THAN HE, MINTOFF, WANTS. DA-RIN, WHOM I DO NOT YET KNOW WELL ENOUGH TO JUDGE ACCURATELY, APPEARS GENUINELY TO BELIEVE HIS GOVERNMENT AND THE REST OF US HAVE INDEED BEEN DELINQUENT IN PICKING UP THE MALTESE PROBLEM. AT THE SAME TIME HE IS ELOQUENT AND NO DOUBT GENUINE IN HIS DESCRIPTION OF MINTOFF AS AN INSUFFERABLE MAN SURROUNDED BY SYCOPHANTS WHO TREMBLE IN HIS PRESENCE AND DO HIS BIDDING WITHOUT QUESTION.

4. DA-RIN INDICATED HIS AWARENESS THAT FRENCH PREFER STRONGLY TO KEEP POLITICAL (I.E. NEUTRALITY IDEA) CAREFULLY SEPARATE FROM ASSISTANCE ASPECTS OF MINTOFF PROPOSAL. FRENCH APPEAR TO HIM TO PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON INVOLVING ALGERIANS AND LIBYANS IN POLITICAL ASPECTS THAN HE BELIEVES HIS GOVERNMENT WANTS, ALONG LINES INDICATED PARIS 00244. DA-RIN SAID HE EXPECTED FRENCH COULD ALSO PROBABLY BE EXPECTED TO REFLECT THEIR NORMAL SENSITIVITY ABOUT DEGREE TO WHICH AMERICANS ARE KEPT INFORMED (AND ULTIMATELY INVOLVED) IN DISCUSSIONS WITH MALTESE. I NOTED WE HAD RECENTLY HAD FAIRLY DETAILED FILL-IN BY QUAL. (EMBASSY VALLETTA WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING WHETHER DEPT HAS RESPONDED IN ANY CONFIDENTIAL

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WAY TO FRENCH QUERIES DESCRIBED IN PARIS 00244).
LAINGEN.
UNQUOTE VANCE.

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